

**Champaign County Health Care Consumers
Renal Research Unit Protest
June 23, 2004**

One of the opening scenes in Hebrew Scripture is Cain asking God whether Cain is his brother's keeper. The question is particularly insightful into human nature as Cain has already killed Abel. While we may think that life, health, and community are values to be vaunted, there are others who choose profit over life, systematic sickness over health, and alienation over community.

Though we were made as people who are responsible, accountable, and connected to one another, people and institutions who act as absentee landlords have threatened to rip apart the quilted fabric of our beloved community.

Champaign-Urbana is the quilted fabric of our beloved community. The Renal Research Institute is a corporate citizen in our beloved community. The Renal Research Institute has said that they will participate in our beloved community through care and healing. These are our loved ones that they serve. These are our families, friends, and neighbors working as employees and health care professionals working at the Renal Research Institute. These are our families, friends, and neighbors they say they will care for and heal.

We call them this day to remember their citizenship in our beloved community . . . to recognize themselves as responsible,

accountable, and connected to the other institutions and the people of Champaign-Urbana. No longer do we want to hear stories of abuse or death that relate directly to the absence of care and healing within their building. We want them here as citizens, as sisters and brothers, not as an institution which disavows its relationship to us by asking whether they should be our keepers. By their incorporation in this state and placement in this community, at the very least the Renal Research Institute is the keeper of our sisters and brothers who turn to them. Their officers and their Board of Directors, by their incorporation and placement within Champaign-Urbana, become citizens of this beloved community.

In the gospels, Jesus is always doing two things: teaching and healing. We talk about the teaching quite a bit, but sometimes we forget that healing is a fundamental task of faith and life. The healing Jesus does in the gospels always returns people to their communities.

Healing allows loved ones to gather around once again. Healing allows people to "get up and eat." Healing, through its tenderness and care, reminds those who are healed that they are children of God.

So we call upon the Renal Research Institute, as a citizen of Champaign-Urbana, our beloved community, to act as responsible, accountable, and a connected citizen. We call upon them to treat their

employees with dignity and fairness so that they may treat the patients with grace and care. We call upon the Renal Research Institute to remember that the handling of life-giving blood is a holy task.

Healing happens when clean linens are available, machinery for the care of blood is kept in repair, loved ones are able to gather around, and people are given the chance to eat.

This is our beloved community. We call you to be a responsible, accountable, and connected citizen within it.